

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: In the healing of the man who was born blind, Jesus revealed that He is the light who has come into the world to remove darkness.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: John 9

Color blindness is a condition that limits the range of color that some people see. Reds and greens may be indistinguishable, for example, or purples may appear only as blues. Some color-blind people may not be able to see up to ninety percent of the various shades of color, resulting in a perspective dominated by browns and blacks.¹

Recently, technology has been developed to help most color-blind people see a fuller range of the color spectrum. This tech has come in the form of special sunglasses, and people have been sharing their videos of trying these glasses on for the first time. The depth of color these people can now see is matched, it seems, by the depth of emotion that soon colors their faces.



Are you or someone you know color blind? How have they spoken of their experience? If you aren't color blind, what would you miss the most if you were?

Group Time

Point 1: Jesus came to be light in the darkness (John 9:1-7).

¹ As he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus answered. “This came about so that God’s works might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ After he said these things he spit on the ground, made some mud from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. ⁷ “Go,” he told him, “wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means “Sent”). So he left, washed, and came back seeing.

In Jesus’ day, and somewhat in ours, the thought prevailed that all suffering was the punishment of someone’s sin. So the disciples wanted to know who messed up: Had the man sinned in the womb or did his parents sin so that he was born blind? In a general sense, the disciples were not wrong for thinking this way. All brokenness and suffering in the world is certainly a result of sin, and sin always has consequences, but people had extended this principle too far. A specific sin hadn’t caused this blindness, but its purpose was about to come to fruition.



Why are we prone to connect all suffering to a person’s sins?

The disciples asked about the specific cause of the man’s blindness, but Jesus answered in terms of its purpose—this man was blind so Jesus could reveal Himself as the light of the world and do the works of God in healing this man of his lifelong blindness. Jesus broke through the man’s physical blindness; similarly, Jesus’ light breaks through our spiritual blindness so that we may see Him in faith, be saved from our sin, and join Him in the work He is doing.

Voices from the Church

“Suffering is not necessarily the result of sin. Jesus taught that suffering is sometimes necessary so that the power of God can be seen through us.”²

—Africa Study Bible

Point 2: Jesus came to do the works of God (John 9:29-33).

²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man—we don't know where he's from."

³⁰ "This is an amazing thing!" the man told them. "You don't know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to him. ³² Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything."

According to the man who was formerly blind, no one had ever heard of anyone restoring sight to someone born blind. In fact, there is no story in the Old Testament of the blind receiving sight (aside from Elisha's enemies in 2 Kings 6:13-20, but that was a special case). This healing is unique because Jesus is unique. He does what no other man could do, and He does what only God can do:

- Throughout the Bible, the act of giving sight to the blind is something only God is capable of (see Ex. 4:11; Ps. 146:8).
- Giving sight to the blind was also a sign of the age to come when God would restore all things (see Isa. 29:18-19; 42:5-8; see also Luke 4:18-21).



What are some ways Jesus supersedes the greatness of people throughout history?

The Pharisees said they didn't know where Jesus was from (they knew He was from Galilee; see John 7:52). They wanted to belittle Him, as if He weren't important enough to know things about. But the healed man claimed they should be able to tell that Jesus is from God because of what He had done. It wasn't the mud or the pool of Siloam that opened his eyes—it was Jesus, and if Jesus did that, it was because God did it through Him. He reasoned that healing comes from God, so Jesus must be from God. How ironic that this unlearned man who had been blind had to teach the Pharisees on good theology!



What are some attitudes and works that reveal our relationship with the Father through faith in Jesus?

Point 3: Jesus came to confront spiritual blindness (John 9:35-41).

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, and when he found him, he asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ “Who is he, Sir, that I may believe in him?” he asked. ³⁷ Jesus answered, “You have seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” ³⁸ “I believe, Lord!” he said, and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and asked him, “We aren’t blind too, are we?” ⁴¹ “If you were blind,” Jesus told them, “you wouldn’t have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

The Pharisees responded to the man’s testimony by throwing him out of the synagogue (John 9:34), so Jesus sought him out. Now that he was cut off from all spiritual connection to his family and people, what would he do? Would he blame the Man who had healed him? No. In fact, upon learning that the Man was the Son of Man, the promised Messiah, he responded with faith and worship. This was the work of God in his heart.



What are some ways we can worship our Lord and Savior for the healing from sin that He gives to us?

Unlike the man who had been healed of his physical blindness, the Pharisees were spiritually blind. They made confident yet woefully wrong assertions that Jesus was not the Messiah. They rejected the true light of the world and thereby confirmed that they were in spiritual darkness. Jesus told us why—they thought they were without sin; they thought they could see—so they remained enslaved to sin.

Enslaved to Sin: Human beings are enslaved to sin, continually living with the propensity to _____ God’s commandments whenever possible. It isn’t until one experiences _____ through the work of Christ that he or she is able to overcome sin’s enslavement through the _____ of the Holy Spirit.

My Mission

Because Jesus has given us sight, we live fully in the light revealed to us as we seek to make Jesus known to others so that their spiritual blindness might be removed as well.

- **What work of faith will you do because Jesus is the Son of Man who heals spiritual blindness and takes away our sin?**
- **What are some opportunities in your community for your group to meet people who are on the margins and in need of the hope of the gospel?**
- **How will you live in the light of Jesus so others become aware of their spiritual darkness and need for Jesus?**



Voices from Church History

“See how he became a herald of grace. See how he preaches the gospel. See how, once he is endowed with sight, he becomes a witness. That blind man testified, and the ungodly were troubled in their hearts because they did not have in their own hearts what they saw in him.”³

—Augustine (354–430)

Notes

Daily Study

Day 1: Read John 9:1-7

Jesus' answer to the disciples' question about the man who was blind wasn't what they expected. They asked Him for a cause, but Jesus responded in terms of purpose—this man had been blind all of his life so that the works of God would be displayed in him. God used the healing of this blind man to reveal that Jesus is the light of the world, to confront the Pharisees in their blindness, and to bring the man born blind to salvation.

Christians aren't promised freedom from suffering in the world, nor are we often given a reason for our suffering. But we do have the hope and assurance that for the believer, our suffering has purpose in the hands of a sovereign God. As Romans 8:28 reminds us, all things, good and terrible, are being worked together by a gracious Father for our good and for His glory.



In what ways have you seen God at work in your suffering, past and present?



Voices from Church History

"We should maintain and believe that since God is the fountain of all righteousness, God will neither do nor determine anything whatsoever in human affairs or in those of the rest of creation that is unbecoming to God or differs at all from the true righteousness of justice."⁴

—Cyril of Alexandria
(c. 378-444)

Day 2: Read John 9:8-12

The neighbors of this man who now could see couldn't believe their own eyes. They wondered if this man with sight was really the same man they knew to be blind or if he were just someone who looked a lot like him. The encounter with Jesus had so drastically changed the man born blind that those around him couldn't help but notice. The general witness of the Gospels is that those who had a supernatural encounter with Jesus usually left the interaction significantly changed.

Following Jesus by faith will produce indelible changes in our lives that others should notice. The way we live, the way we speak, and how we interact with others will all be affected as we follow Christ. And as others wonder at the changes in our lives, we're able to share about the One who changed our lives.



What is one way your life has been different since following Jesus?

Day 3: Read John 9:13-28

The Pharisees were trying to get to the bottom of this miracle in the man who had been blind. They interrogated him about what happened. They asked him who he thought Jesus was, but they didn't like his answer, so they interrogated his parents next. Afraid, his mother and father deflected to their son, so the Pharisees went again to ask the man what really happened. His response was simple: "I was blind, and now I can see!" (v. 25). At that, they began to ridicule him.

This man wasn't well versed in theology, nor could he tell you much about Jesus. What he did know was what Jesus had done and how that had changed him. This is at the heart of what it means to witness to others about Jesus. Though answers are helpful to have, we ultimately don't need all of them. What we need is a testimony about how Jesus has changed our lives.



How would you answer someone who asked you what Jesus has done for you?

Day 4: Read John 9:29-34

Things seemed to be going in the right direction for the man who had been born blind because he wasn't blind anymore! After a lifetime of hearing people talk about sight but never experiencing it himself, he now could see what his parents looked like, the majestic rise of trees, and the synagogue he worshiped in. This was probably the best day of his life.

Then the religious leaders excommunicated him from the synagogue because he said Jesus had come from God. This man's young faith brought rejection from his neighbors, his leaders, and perhaps even his parents. God doesn't promise that following Jesus means life gets easier. Often it means it gets harder. Jesus is the light of the world who brought love, grace, and healing, and yet, He was crucified, and His followers should expect the same hatred and persecution Jesus experienced from the world (John 15:18-21). You may be rejected in this life because of your faith, but God's promise is that there is joy and a future hope because Jesus was rejected for us.



What promises of God can you cling to when trials and suffering come?

Day 5: Read John 9:35-41

Upon hearing that the man He healed had been thrown out of the synagogue, Jesus went and found the man so that He could reveal Himself as the Messiah. Jesus was on a divine mission, seeking out the redemption of the world through His impending death and resurrection, and yet, He went back to this man who had been cut off religiously and socially. The same Jesus who healed the man without prompting now sought him out and gave him true spiritual sight to see Jesus for who He really is. Jesus doesn't just care about performing miracles; He cares that people see Him as true light.

Our true need isn't just physical needs being met. Our true need is a spiritual need—to see Jesus rightly and worship Him. We mustn't neglect physical needs, but as we work to alleviate suffering and meet the needs of those around us, we ought always to point people to Jesus.



In what ways can you meet the physical needs of the people you are sharing the gospel with?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- Jesus came to be light in the darkness (John 9:1-7).
- Jesus came to do the works of God (John 9:29-33).
- Jesus came to confront spiritual blindness (John 9:35-41).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



How should we see ourselves in the story about the man born blind?



What should we find most encouraging about this man's testimony after Jesus healed him?

Notes

The Gospel Project®

Adult Daily Discipleship Guide CSB
Volume 8, Number 4 Summer 2020

Ed Stetzer

Founding Editor

Trevin Wax

General Editor

Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor

Daniel Davis

Content Editor

Josh Hayes

Content and Production Editor

Ken Braddy

Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

Brandon Hiltibidal

Director, Groups Ministry

Send questions/comments to:

Content Editor by email to
daniel.davis@lifeway.com or mail to
Content Editor, *The Gospel Project: Adult
Daily Discipleship Guide*, One LifeWay Plaza,
Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments
on the Web at lifeway.com.

Printed in the United States of America

*The Gospel Project®: Adult Daily Discipleship
Guide* CSB (ISSN 2162-7207; Item 005461524)
is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian
Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN
37234, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2020 LifeWay
Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit lifeway.com, or
write LifeWay Resources Customer Service, One
LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113. For bulk
shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email
orderentry@lifeway.com, fax 615.251.5933, or write
to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author;
salvation for its end; and truth, without any
mixture of error, for its matter and that all
Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To
review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit
www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the
Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright 2017 by
Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

A Word from the Editor



Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor—*The Gospel Project*
AUTHOR OF *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry*
AND *Cornerstones: 200 Questions and
Answers to Learn Truth*

Jesus was born to die—a jarring statement
indeed, but one that is quite true.

Christmas and Easter are fused together,
linked hand-in-hand in such a way that each is dependent on
the other for its meaning. The theology of such a statement is
solid but incomplete, for Jesus was not born to die immediately
but rather some thirty years later. Jesus' life, then, was not
utilitarian—existing just so it could be taken away and picked
up again—it had greater meaning and purpose. What Jesus
did during those thirty years of walking the earth mattered; He
lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. He satisfied the
demands of righteousness that we could not so He might take
away our sin when we trust in Him and so His righteousness
might be credited to us, making us fully pleasing to the Father
(2 Cor. 5:21).

In this volume we delve deeper into the marvelous truth of the
incarnation to see still further glimpses of Christ's glory on
earth. His righteousness did not occur in a vacuum but rather
among people, ordinary people like you and me. In each unit
of this volume, we will look at Jesus' interactions with people
as through a prism, making slight turns to see different yet
equally brilliant perspectives of Jesus' works. In Unit 22, we
will see Jesus' power to heal coupled with His deep compassion
for people, even those who were marginalized in society. In
Unit 23, we will see Jesus' riveting teachings empowered
by His divine authority. And finally, in Unit 24, we will see
Jesus' miraculous power over nature, revealing His identity as
Creator God.

Each ray of light we will see points to the same truth: that Jesus
is the Messiah, the Son of God given for our salvation. Jesus
was indeed born to die, but He lived so that we too might live.

EDITOR

UNIT 22

SESSION 1

1. Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, in *Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009) [Wordsearch].
2. Charles H. Spurgeon, "'Where Are the Nine?' Where?" in *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon: Volume 51, Sermons 2916 to 2967* (Delmarva Publications, Inc., 2013) [eBook].

SESSION 2

1. Kim Huat Tan, *Mark*, in *New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015) [Wordsearch].
2. Ray Ortlund, "Jesus and Faith," *Renewal Ministries*, January 27, 2013, renewalministries.com/message/jesus-and-faith.

SESSION 3

1. Kelyn Soong, "Veteran who lost both legs completes 31 marathons in 31 days, runners trailing his every step," *The Washington Post*, November 12, 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/news/dc-sports-bog/wp/2017/11/12/veteran-who-lost-both-legs-runs-31-marathons-in-31-days-in-31-cities-trailed-every-step/?utm_term=.8f45e3e7c805.
2. Balthasar Hubmaier, *On the Freedom of the Will*, quoted in *John 1–12*, ed. Craig S. Farmer, vol. 4 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014) [Wordsearch].
3. Joni Eareckson Tada, *Heaven: Your Real Home* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995) [eBook].
4. Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 4 (London: W. Baynes, 1806), 526.

SESSION 4

1. EnChroma®, "How EnChroma Glasses Work," October 23, 2019, enchroma.com/pages/how-enchroma-glasses-work.
2. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1546.
3. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 44.8, quoted in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
4. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 6.1, quoted in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

UNIT 23

SESSION 1

1. Charles Quarles, *The Sermon on the Mount*, in *NAC Studies in Bible & Theology* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011), 333.
2. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "The Salt of the Earth," November 30, 2019, www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/salt.html.
3. Frank Thielman, "Matthew," in *Gospel Transformation Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1275, n. 5:13–16.

SESSION 2

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 87.
2. J. C. Ryle, "What It Costs to Be a True Christian," December 4, 2019, www.the-highway.com/cost_Ryle.html.

SESSION 3

1. John Bunyan, "Discourse on Prayer," in *The Works of That Eminent Servant of Christ, John Bunyan*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: John Ball, 1850), 80.
2. John Onwuchekwa, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 43.

SESSION 4

1. Leo the Great, Sermon 90.4.1, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Arthur A. Just Jr., vol. III in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Rebecca Faires, "Consider the Ravens," in *She Reads Truth Bible*, gen. eds. Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1763.

SESSION 5

1. Martin Luther, House Postil (1544): Sunday After Easter (1544), quoted in *John 1–12*, ed. Craig S. Farmer, vol. 4 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014) [Wordsearch].
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (New York: HarperOne, 1976), 26.
3. John Piper, "My Abandoned Life for Your Abundant Life," *Desiring God*, August 6, 2011, www.desiringgod.org/messages/my-abandoned-life-for-your-abundant-life--2.
4. See C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 52.

UNIT 24

SESSION 1

1. Trillia J. Newbell, *Fear and Faith* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2015), 119.
2. Tertullian, *On Flight During Persecution*, quoted in *Mark*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, vol. II in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 65.
3. Philipp Melancthon, *An Ecclesiastical Exposition upon Saint Mathewe 8*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 2

1. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 270.
2. Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 134.
3. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1538.
4. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 3.4, quoted in *John 1–10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 211.
5. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. ed., in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 317.

SESSION 3

1. John Newton, *The Aged Pilgrim's Triumph over Sin and the Grave*, 2nd ed. (London: Baker and Fletcher, 1825), 33–34.
2. J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973, reprint 2018), 32.

SESSION 4

1. David Brainerd, in *Memoirs of the Rev. David Brainerd* (New-Haven: S. Converse, 1822), 125.
2. C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1866), 137.